

Friendship Heights TMD Advisory Committee Meeting

Summary – Meeting of September 11, 2007

2

Voting Members Present

Bob Cope (Chair)	Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights
David Glass	Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers
Leonard Grant	Friendship Heights Village Council
Mary Herman	Polinger Shannon and Luchs (Employer of greater than 50)
Gregory Knoop	Oudens + Knoop Architects (Employer of fewer than 50)
Leslie Olson	Chevy Chase Land Company
Steven Robins, Esq.	Lerch, Early and Brewer, Representing Wisconsin Place
Carlean Russell	Saks Fifth Avenue (Employer of greater than 50)
Robert Schwarzbart	Friendship Heights Village Council
Jeffrey Slavin	Town of Somerset
R. Mallory Starr	Somerset House Management Association
Garry Tyran	Eagle Bank (Employers of fewer than 50)
Kenneth Williams	GEICO

Non-Voting Members Present

Sandra Brecher	DPWT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
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TMD Staff Present

David Kantor	DPWT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
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Absent

Jessica Adams (Vice Chair)	The JBG Companies
Chief Roy Gordon	Chevy Chase Village Police
Capt. Wayne Jerman	Montgomery County Police
Charles Kines	M-NCPPC
Deborah Snead	Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center

Guests

Robert Ballard	WMATA
John Coleman	WMATA
Capt. Russell Hamill	Montgomery County Police
Norvale Montgomery	WMATA
Julian Mansfield	Friendship Heights Village Manager
Stephen Petruccelli	WMATA
Stan Smith	WMATA
Joseph Triolo	WMATA

Items 1, 2, & 3 – Introductions, Review/Approval of Minutes, Chair's Comments:

Sandra Brecher called the meeting to order in the absence of **Chair Bob Cope**, who arrived shortly thereafter. The July 10, 2007, minutes were reviewed and approved with the following corrections: **Leslie Olson** noted the following statement in the minutes: "Earlier attempts by a contractor to adjust the ceiling panels in some areas have left wide openings around some of the sprinkler heads, **possibly affecting their operation.**" **Ms. Olson** stated there was no question about the impaired operation; according to the Fire Marshal, the gaps did compromise the integrity of the Fire Protection Package.

The motion to adopt the minutes approved, with corrections.

Mr. Cope commented that when the committee met six years ago, on the morning of 9/11/2001, four of the current members were in also in attendance that day. He noted that on that particular morning he could not even get down to the subway, but that about 20 or 30 Metrobuses had managed to make their way down Massachusetts Avenue.

Stephen Petruccelli, WMATA, added an anecdote about a particular bus driver who was en route to the Pentagon when it was hit. The driver had the presence of mind to turn around and stop periodically to let people off and on the bus.

Ms. Brecher displayed a Certificate of Appreciation from the County Executive which will be given to Howard Byron for his many years of work on the committee. Despite stepping down, Mr. Byron has offered to remain involved with regard to some of his continuing interests.

Item 4: Bus Station Update

Mr. Petruccelli stated that WMATA had a lengthy meeting with the Montgomery County Fire Marshal. The Marshal's Office said it was very appreciative of the efforts to notify the bus operators not to idle in the terminal at all until such time as the retrofit of the exhaust systems was completed. WMATA started the retrofit in the middle of August. There are only a few buses remaining to retrofit.

Mr. Petruccelli explained the retrofit project for the record. He displayed a picture of the old exhaust systems of certain of the buses, which had a straight exhaust pipe extending from the roof of the bus, and explained that the location of the exhaust system had set off the sprinklers a number of times due to the proximity of the heat and fumes to the sprinklers. He then showed a visual of the new exhaust system, which lowers and angles the exhaust pipe at 90 degrees. Mr. Petruccelli expects all of the affected buses to be retrofitted (about 100). He expects the work to be completed by mid October. The Fire Marshal was complimentary about the improvements. There are still some drivers idling their buses despite the directive from WMATA. The Fire Marshal will spot check for idling buses.

Joseph Triolo, WMATA, stated that the ceiling material has been ordered for the modifications. WMATA still needs to obtain two permits: A building permit and a fire protection permit, since some sprinkler heads will need to be shortened to accommodate the change in ceiling height. Mr. Triolo stated that WMATA should be applying for the building permit this week. At that time, they should have drawings for Chevy Chase Land Company (CCLC), which must review the drawings as well. WMATA's contractor is working with the CCLC contractor, East Coast Fire Protection, who installed the original sprinkler system. WMATA's contractor will be ordering the new sprinkler heads and install them under the supervision of the East Coast Fire Protection. East Coast Fire Protection will be submitting for the fire protection permit after the building permit is obtained.

Since refitting the sprinklers is expected to be done quickly, it is possible that a "fast track permit" will be given. WMATA expects to get the ceiling materials in sometime in September, perhaps within the next week or two. Construction may begin in October. The work should take 4-6 weeks to finish. The hope is that the work will be completed before the cold weather hits, preferably before December.

Mr. Triolo will work with **Mr. Petruccelli** to work out the staging plan for the construction. They will work with Montgomery County on this as well. Mr. Triolo's contractor will also patch up the openings around the sprinkler heads.

Robert Schwarzbart stated that those at Friendship Heights Village appreciate WMATA's efforts, and asked how WMATA feels the use of the terminal will be impacted during the time of the repair.

Mr. Petruccelli stated that they are not totally certain, but that his group and Mr. Triolo's group will get together and decide what will be the best staging plan. They will decide internally and then run it through Commuter Services and **Ms. Olson**. They will try to maintain the current service level, if possible, while trying to find the best times during the day to do the work. They are trying to keep the loop open as much as possible.

Ms. Brecher stated that Ride On is aware of the impending ceiling work and is planning to work with WMATA to figure out how it affects Ride On's operations.

Mr. Cope stated that he appreciates the work being done, since a large number of people transfer daily from the subway to the buses. He also noted that he had not thought much about it before, but that he's come to realize the large number of buses running to Silver Spring from the Friendship Heights station.

5. Introduction – New 2nd District Police Commander

Capt. Russell Hamill introduced himself to the committee as the new 2nd District Commander, the position previously held by **Capt. Wayne Jerman**. Capt. Hamill worked in Bethesda as a Sergeant prior to his current assignment. He has worked with Sgt. Roy Russell, Traffic Sergeant for the Bethesda District.

Capt. Hamill noted that there were some recent car thefts in the Bethesda District and that people should always lock their vehicles. There have been only a few incidents of car break-ins involving a locked vehicle – the vast majority of thefts occur because cars are not locked.

In response to an observation that buses are still parking along Wisconsin Circle, **Capt. Russell** said he would follow up with WMATA on enforcement.

6. Taxi Stand/Call Button

Ms. Brecher displayed one of the signs planned to direct riders to the taxi call button. There have been some discussions over whether these signs will actually be placed inside the terminal.

Mr. Cope stated that there were some prior discussions over where the signs could be placed. CCLC prefers they not be attached to any of the perimeter pillars supporting the station building or to the fascia along the top of the ceiling across from the escalator. However, there is a useable spot located within the building, near the escalator from the Metro. There is currently a sign mounted on a pillar next to the convenience store, directing people to the Willard Avenue taxi stand; this sign could be replaced with the taxi call button sign.

Leslie Olson stated that WMATA has a sign stanchion in the station. They have recently put up signs with schedules and Metro locations, features, etc. It would be a WMATA issue to allow space for an additional sign to be attached. She stated that the signs WMATA put up are new and looked expensive, so it is unlikely that they would agree to have anything else attached to it.

Mr. Schwarzbart expressed concern about commuters finding the call button since it is recessed in the building. **Ms. Brecher** responded that there would be similar signage near the button, on a long vertical window near the commuter store indicating the call button location.

Ms. Brecher stated that multiple directional signs may be necessary. There will be a 24-hour vestibule available in the new Commuter Store, which would provide shelter in case of inclement weather.

Jeffrey Slavin expressed concern that the sign lettering may be too small.

Mr. Schwarzbart mentioned that there were often Giant Delivery trucks where the taxi stand is supposed to be. **Ms. Olson** stated that this is driver error.

Greg Knoop added that the sign would be improved if it had an international symbol for taxi.

Ms. Brecher stated that the county was hoping to put the signs up within the terminal within the week, pending WMATA and CCLC approval. The county is awaiting permission from the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and the State Highway Administration (SHA) to place signs along the Western and Wisconsin Avenue sidewalks.

7. Other Business

Mr. Cope stated that Bloomingdales opened on 9/27, and the garage opened on 9/17.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 AM

Next meeting: October 9, 2007